

Agricultural Marketing Service
Office of the Deputy Administrator, Marketing Programs
Dairy Division
Dairy Grading Branch
Office of the Chief
National Field Office
GS-1980-9
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Dairy)

SJ 318

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Field Office is responsible for administering the nationwide inspection and grading of nonfat dry milk, cheese, butter and other dairy and related products at terminal markets, shipping points, assembling and packaging plants, and inspection of dairy processing, packaging and manufacturing plant facilities and equipment.

The incumbent serves as an Agricultural Commodity Grader responsible for serving as a resident plant grader; as such, the incumbent performs the full range of inspection and grading activities at a dairy plant, including monitoring quality control, performing sanitation inspections, conducting/overseeing laboratory analyses of dairy products, and maintaining liaison with plant management.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Monitors and advises plant management on the plant quality control program. Reviews plant practices and assures product quality and wholesomeness by performing or directing licensed laboratory technicians in the performance of a variety of laboratory tests (e.g., fat, moisture, bacteriological, etc.) on raw and finished products.

Performs regular sanitation inspections which are structured so as to provide early detection of quality or sanitation problems and to effect prompt, accurate remedial action. Evaluates plant's compliance with USDA specifications for official plant approval by main surveillance and reviewing plant premises, equipment, and operations, etc. Identifies deficiencies as well as potential/existing problem areas, and recommends corrective course(s) of action. Assures that problem areas are resolved/corrected and that the plant continues to adhere to pertinent specifications/requirements.

Inspects individual production lots of the plant to determine lot identification, type and condition of packages, condition of the product and selects representative samples from the lot for grading purposes.

Interprets and applies official standards and regulations in the grading and certification of dairy products according to degree and intensity of such factors as flavor, body, texture, color, finish and appearance. Determines the U.S. Grade or other contract specifications (e.g., testing, weighing) and prepares graders' memoranda, and signs and issues official certificates on-site.

Acts as the officially designated contact and maintains relations with plant management, explaining grade determinations; obtaining corrections in sanitation, processing or storage conditions; advising on quality control methods; explaining grading program activities; and coordinating the grading services with plant activities.

Provides technical guidance to licensed laboratory technicians.

Checks accuracy of scales for weighing and establishes an accurate tare weight of packaging material; weighs samples of product (recording the weights converted from ounces to decimals for easier computation) and computes and certifies the tare and net weight for the lot tested.

As required, inspects product at time of loading in order to identify the commodity as that which was previously inspected and found to meet quality requirements of the contract/specification, examines the lot at time of loading for condition of containers and for compliance with labeling and case marking requirements, ascertains and records number of cases per car or truck, seals or supervises sealing of loaded cars or trucks, and performs any other examination necessary to determine compliance with the applicable inspection request specifications or contract.

Adheres to Civil Rights policies, goals and objectives in performing the duties of this position. Assures that oral and written communications are bias-free and that differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-6 950 pts.

Knowledge of the official grade standards, regulations, and specifications of dairy products, and knowledge of the related product characteristics, factors, and conditions necessary to grade and inspect dairy products and serve as the resident grader at a dairy product facility.

Thorough knowledge of a variety of dairy processing methods and procedures, related storage and shipping practices, sanitation and equipment requirements to inspect plants for compliance with required specifications, identify deficiencies and work with plant management to effect positive action in order to remain eligible to prepare approved product.

Detailed knowledge of quality control procedures and requirements in order to review the plant's program and provide advice regarding same.

Knowledge of and skill in performing a full range of laboratory analyses (e.g., fat, moisture, chemical, and bacteriological) and ability to interpret results and determine whether product meets established standards/specification requirements. Ability to oftentimes oversee direct plant laboratory employees in the performance of required analyses.

Thorough skill and ability in grading dairy products, inspecting facilities, and maintaining proper relationships with industry personnel.

2. Supervisory Controls Level 2-3 275 pts.

The assignment is defined in terms of the general grading and inspection services which are to be provided at the particular plant. The employee independently plans and performs the day-to-day work, adjusting specific procedures to meet varying situations.

The grader resolves nearly all technical problems that arise during the course of normal activities. Unusual situations, difficult policy interpretations, questions on grading products not normally run at the plant, or similar questions are discussed with the supervisor. The supervisor periodically visits the plant to resolve particularly controversial issues and to review the employee's work through spot checks of worksheets, reports, certificates and technical proficiency. Laboratory testing work is reviewed on a regular cycle through comparative testing.

3. Guidelines Level 3-3 275 pts.

The guides consist of the official grade standards for dairy products; regulations pertaining to plant sanitation and processing; contract or purchase specifications; instructional manuals for grading and conducting inspections; established laboratory procedures; and supplemental written and oral instructions. The employee independently selects and applies the appropriate guides to a variety of situations and is required to use extensive judgment in interpretation of the standards and regulations in such cases as making borderline grade determinations; independently explaining or advising industry management, monitoring plant quality control program, etc.

4. Complexity Level 4-3 150 pts.

The work consists of performing the full range of grading and inspecting activities at a dairy processing/production facility, including grading and inspecting dairy products as requested by the plant, inspecting equipment, conducting sanitation inspections and assuring ongoing sanitation of the plant, inspecting storage and processing conditions, and performing laboratory tests, etc. Performance of this full range of work requires considering different factors and applying different procedures according to the specific product or phase of work being performed. The duties require evaluation of technically complex processing equipment.

5. Scope and Effect Level 5-3 150 pts.

The work involves carrying out a full range of activities at a plant location, which collectively result in determining the grade and/or acceptability of dairy products based on analysis/review of a multitude of factors as well as application of official standards and specifications. The certificates issued by the employee represent the seal of approval by the government as to the wholesomeness of dairy products for human consumption. Also, the determinations by the employee directly affect the financial interests of buyers and sellers, often serving as the basis of settlement between them.

6. Personal Contacts Level 6-2 25 pts.

Contacts include the employees and managers of dairy processing plants, as well as other agricultural commodity graders.

7. Purpose of the Contacts Level 7-3 120 pts.

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of plant management and industry employees and resolve conflicts; to explain grade determinations and related agency policies and regulations; and to advise on or exchange information related to technical matters.

8. Physical Demands Level 8-3 50 pts.

Commodity grading work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of products often weighing over 50 pounds; prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity in both hands to perform digital examinations of commodities; ability to detect abnormalities in the commodity through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth perception, and color, the ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and the ability to determine product quality through sensory perception (taste, smell, etc.)

9. Work Environment Level 9-2 20 pts.

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, and similar risks typical of dairy processing plants and storage areas.

Total points = 2015 = GS-9